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DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE

IN CHARGE OF

EDNA L. FOLEY, R.N.

VACATION SKETCHES

(Continued from page 405)

Dined at Mansfield House, a large settlement in Canningtown, Borough of West Ham, just beyond the East India docks, where John Burns so successfully conducted the great dock strike that lasted from May 24 to July 27, 1912. Nurses who have visited the families of longshoremen would know the conditions found in Canningtown, casual labor, poor pay, bad housing, much destitution. English families show their best side on Sunday, streets, door-ways, children, even windows, are cleaned up but the number of missions, settlements, public baths and clinics, pawn-shops and public-houses bear witness to the needs of the community. *The Bitter Cry of London* could not be written of the East End now, for it accomplished its mission in the early '80's but there still remains much to be done there.

Next door to Mansfield House is the fine building of the Canningtown Women's Settlement, with its special work of supervision over 500 crippled children, its mothers' classes where fine prenatal work is done, its summer outing and hundred and one other settlement interests. Nurses visiting London will be glad to see this work and also the small twenty-four bed hospital, some distance away, maintained by it. Of special interest in this are two beds, one supported by nurses, the other by members of the Woman's Guild of the Canningtown Women's Settlement. These guild members are all neighborhood women and their support of this bed, when every penny means so much to each one of them, shows their appreciation of Miss Cheatham and the other settlement workers.

In the afternoon we went to an open air Brotherhood Service in a small park in Canningtown at which Will Crooks, a labor member of Parliament, was the chief speaker. His simple, working-man's presentation of his theme, "Why we believe," appealed mightily to his audience while his shrewd comments and homely narratives delighted his hearers and kept everyone eagerly attentive. The following remarks brought forth appreciative "Hear, hear's."

"A man who's master in his own house is more to be pitied than any other man for he has forgotten that marriage is a partnership." "There are no great men; if God has given a man great capacities, he is great in so far as he uses these capacities in the service of the people." "A public man is a public target." When a drunken man interrupted him—"I wish they'd close the 'pubs' on Sunday." "Don't argue when you're tired." "Don't get angry." "Don't take the workshop home with you." "Don't talk trouble before the children." "Don't worry over what you can't mend." "Don't think the world can't get along without you, it can."

Will Crooks is said to have been born in an English work-house; anyone who has the good fortune to hear him, knows why he has risen to his present deserved place of public honor and trust. He is not only the representative of the laboring classes in Parliament, he is their interpreter to themselves, a working-man of ability and satisfied to be a good one.

August 10. To Mansfield House to go with the warden to the noon-day luncheon of the school children. Parliament has just passed a law legalizing this feeding during vacation. In a one-story building, quite apart from the school and originally intended for cooking classes, we saw nearly 160 children given a meal of Irish stew with two thick slices of bread and treacle. The food was well prepared and decently served, each child coming with clean hands and face and presenting his ticket before taking his place. Under the "Provision of Meals Act" of 1906, three meals are provided daily for needy, under-nourished children of school age. The menu for the entire week is given on a chart at each centre, seven of which were needed in the West Ham Borough. In two districts, where the number of children requiring this aid is small, the meals are provided at local restaurants. Was later shown an educational report for the year ending March 1912, which stated that 6728 of the 59,691 school children were given 1,117,091 meals. 5069 of these were children of dock laborers. During the dock strike more than 5000 children were fed weekly, at other times, the weekly average was slightly over 2000. At one time during the strike, four thousand children were fed at each meal at one school center. Any school child may receive these meals if a parent makes application and an investigator finds the request justified by home conditions. Often the meals are given during a temporary depression of domestic finances or upon advice of a teacher who has persuaded a parent to apply for this aid. Only one case of serious fraudulent representation was found during the entire year. The report contains some interesting tables showing the types and size of families from which the children came.

This same volume describes the work done by the medical inspectors, school nurses, oculist and dentist and gives a report of the school clinic, with recommendations for its expansion. Evidently some English parents also occasionally object to school inspection, for their children are excused from the routine medical but not from the "cleanliness" inspection. For this latter, both physician and nurse have been furnished with the necessary legal power in writing. The eyes of all new children are carefully examined and old patients are followed up each year. The special work in the dental department is the attention given the teeth of children between the ages of six and eight years, the period when neglected molars are first attacked by caries. A dentist gives his entire time to this clinic. The accommodation of each school must provide 10 square feet for each child in the upper grades and 9 square feet for each pupil in the infant schools. (How many American school-nurses know our space-requirements?)¹

Later we visited a municipal tuberculosis dispensary on Balaam Street. The entire building (from the street it looked like one of our temporary election booths) and equipment cost less than \$4000 but it provided a waiting room, two small dressing rooms, a small laboratory, a nurse's supply room and a good examining room and physician's office combined. Patients were examined only by appointment and after a home visit had been made by one of the two nurses on duty at the clinic. Contacts were examined in every family. There was close coöperation between the sanatoria and the clinic, a home visit being made before any patient was dismissed and the names of all dismissed patients being reported in writing to the clinic. Milk was provided through the dispensary for some cases.

Paper napkins were not used but a dark blue four ounce glass sputum flask, widemouthed, with rubber stopper was given each expectorating patient with instructions to empty the flask when not more than half full, and thoroughly boil both flask and cork.

Of particular interest were the detailed, individual instructions which Dr. Collins gave to each patient and which he promises to publish later in the *British Journal of Tuberculosis*.

The nurses give no nursing care and the routine of clinic work and home visiting is much the same as ours. There seems, however, to be no organized municipal tuberculosis nursing staff, the nurses in each dispensary reporting only to the physician in charge.

Thence to the London Hospital on Mile End Road, in a very con-

¹ These details were all taken from the Ninth Report on the Work of the Education Committee of the County Borough of West Ham, April 1, 1912, March 31, 1913.

gested district, the largest of the privately-supported free hospitals. Its thousand beds are always full and its large outpatient department handles hundreds of patients daily. Of special interest here are the "Light-rooms" where about 300 cases of lupus come in at stated intervals for their Finsen-ray treatment. This is given by nurses of whom there were eight or ten at work during my call. Hospital social service was instituted here as early as 1791 by Sir William Blizard, for 53 years surgeon to the London Hospital, who founded the Samaritan Society to assist discharged and convalescent patients. In 1913, more than ten thousand patients were helped by this department, now known as the Marie Celeste Samaritan Society. Although its funds are quite distinct from those of the hospital, since 1792, it has had an office in the hospital, a gift from the governors. A graduate nurse is its head worker.

ITEM

CONNECTICUT

The seventh annual report of the Middletown District Nurses' Association shows that the staff has been increased to three graduate nurses and one pupil nurse from the Middlesex Hospital Training School. Each pupil nurse serves six weeks. One-third (nearly \$400.00) of a special fund left to the worthy poor of Middletown by a former resident is given the Association annually and this money is devoted to special relief, treats or apparatus for convalescing patients. A new patients' record system has been installed and the nurses keep daily office hours from 4 to 6 p.m. 11,530 calls were made in 1914 in Middletown and the adjoining town of Portland. The Association has over 1000 subscribers, the amounts ranging from \$50.00 to less than one dollar. There are 465 one dollar memberships. Harriet B. Ball (Rhode Island Hospital) is head-nurse.